

Program Overview – National Leadership Grants for Museums

National Leadership Grants (NLG) for Museums support projects that address critical needs of the museum field and that have the potential to advance practice in the profession so that museums can improve services for the American public. Successful proposals will generate results such as models, new tools, research findings, services, practices, and/or alliances that can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to extend and leverage the benefits of federal investment.

Distinguishing features of all National Leadership Grants for Museums projects are:

- **Broad Impact:** Projects should show the potential for far-reaching impact beyond the applicant institution and influence practice across one or more disciplines or specific fields within the museum profession.
- **In-depth Knowledge:** Proposals should reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter and an awareness and support of current strategic initiatives and agendas in the field.
- **Innovative Approach:** Proposals should employ novel approaches or techniques new to the project area to strengthen and improve museum services to benefit the audiences and communities being served.
- **Collaborative Process:** Project should incorporate audience, stakeholders and/or other partners to demonstrate broad need, field-wide buy-in and input, access to appropriate expertise, and sharing of resources.
- **Shared Results:** Project should generate results such as models, new tools, research findings, services, practices, and/or alliances that can be widely used, adapted, scaled, or replicated to extend and leverage the benefits of federal investment.

There are three project categories within the NLG-Museums grant program:

Learning Experiences

IMLS places the learner at the center and supports engaging experiences in museums that prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society. Projects should advance the museum field's ability to provide high-quality, inclusive, accessible and audience-focused learning opportunities; provide access to collections, information, and educational resources; encourage the use of technologies; and develop programs for specific segments of the public.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Development, implementation, and dissemination of model programs that create engaging learning opportunities
- Development and implementation of training and professional development programs, tools, or resources that build the knowledge, skills and abilities of museum staff and/or volunteers in multiple institutions
- Research focusing on the role of museums in engaging learners

Community Anchors

IMLS promotes museums as strong community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality. Projects should advance the museum field's ability to harness the expertise, knowledge, space, and/or other resources of museums in order to address specific community needs.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Development, implementation, and dissemination of model programs that use museum resources to address community needs
- Development of new and innovative methods for addressing community challenges through partnerships, services, processes, or practices
- Development and implementation of training and professional development programs, tools, or resources that build the knowledge, skills and abilities of museum staff and/or volunteers to meet the needs of their communities
- Research focusing on the role and value of museums as community anchors

Collections Stewardship

IMLS supports exemplary stewardship of museum collections and promotes the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage. Projects should advance the museum field's ability to identify new solutions that address high priority and widespread collections care or conservation issues.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Development, implementation and dissemination of new tools or services that facilitate access, presentation, management, preservation, sharing, and use of museum collections
- Development and implementation of training and professional development programs, tools, or resources that impact the ability of museum staff and/or volunteers in multiple institutions to improve the stewardship of collections
- Research focusing on any broadly relevant aspect of the management, conservation and preservation of collections.
- Building or strengthening coalitions to enhance collections care